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NIGHT LEAD INFORMATION
BY FRANK ELEAZER

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

WASHINGTON, MAY 23 (UPI)--A SPACE AGENCY OFFICIAL CONCEDED TODAY THERE COULD BE "A WHOLE FLOCK" OF RUSSIAN SATELLITES ORBITING THE EARTH ABOUT WHICH THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TOLD NOTHING.

GEORGE L. SIMPSON JR., AN ASSISTANT SPACE AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR, ALSO SAID INFORMATION KNOWN TO THIS GOVERNMENT ABOUT SOVIET FAILURES ORDINARILY IS SECRET.

HE CONCEDED THAT IT IS THEORETICALLY POSSIBLE UNDER THE EXISTING REPORTING SYSTEM FOR A LAUNCH OR FAILURE ACTUALLY ANNOUNCED BY RUSSIA TO BE WITHHELD FROM PUBLICATION IN THIS GOVERNMENT'S WEEKLY "SATELLITE SITUATION REPORT."

TESTIFYING AT AN OPEN SESSION OF A HOUSE INFORMATION SUBCOMMITTEE, SIMPSON DECLINED TO SAY WHETHER HE HAS INFORMATION OF ABORTIVE RUSSIAN SPACE EFFORTS OTHER THAN SIX WHICH WERE PUBLICLY REPORTED BY THE NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE AGENCY (NASA) LAST FALL. HE OFFERED TO DISCUSS THIS IN CLOSED SESSION.

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SIMPSON'S TESTIMONY BROUGHT HIM UNDER SHARP ATTACK BY SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS. THEY QUESTIONED WHETHER TAXPAYERS COULD BE EXPECTED TO PUT UP BILLIONS OF DOLLARS YEARLY FOR SPACE WORK WITHOUT KNOWING HOW THIS COUNTRY STANDS IN THE FIELD IN RELATION TO RUSSIA.

AMONG HIS OTHER DUTIES, SIMPSON PUBLISHES A WEEKLY NON-SECRET REPORT THAT IS SUPPOSED TO LIST ALL OBJECTS IN SPACE, ALONG WITH THEIR CHARACTERISTICS, BROADCAST FREQUENCIES, AND OTHER INFORMATION.

HE REPRODUCED ON A SCREEN FOR SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS A PAGE OF THE MOST RECENT REPORT. IT SHOWED A NUMBER OF RUSSIAN OBJECTS IN SPACE.

REP. PORTER HARDY JR., D-V.A., ASKED WHETHER THIS MEANT THAT THAT WAS ALL THE RUSSIAN SPACE OBJECTS THERE WERE. SIMPSON SAID IT MEANT THAT THIS WAS ALL THERE WERE THAT HAD BEEN REPORTED TO NASA BY THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT ON A NON-SECRET BASIS.

"SO THERE MAY BE A WHOLE FLOCK OF OTHER SOVIET LAUNCHES IN THAT SAME PERIOD THAT YOU HAVEN'T TOLD US ABOUT?" HARDY DEMANDED.

"YES SIR," SIMPSON CONCEDED.

AS FOR RUSSIAN FAILURES, SIMPSON SAID HE IS NOT SURE EVEN HE GETS ALL THE AVAILABLE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE, BUT THAT HE IS CONFIDENT OTHER NASA OFFICIALS MORE DIRECTLY CONCERNED ARE AS FULLY INFORMED AS ANYBODY IN GOVERNMENT.

CHAIRMAN JOHN E. MOSS, D-CALIF., SAID THE SUBCOMMITTEE WOULD PURSUE FURTHER, WITH TOP NASA AND DEFENSE OFFICIALS, WHETHER THE SATELLITE REPORTING PROGRAM HAS FALLEN VICTIM TO OVER-SECURITY.

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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW